WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of detecting the presence of a bipolar mood disorder susceptibility locus in an individual comprising:

analyzing a sample of DNA from said individual for the presence of a DNA polymorphism on the short arm of chromosome 18 between SAVA5 and ga203, wherein said DNA polymorphism is associated with a form of bipolar mood disorder.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said DNA polymorphism is located on the short arm of chromosome 18 between D18S1140 and ga203, inclusive.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said DNA polymorphism is located on the short arm of chromosome 18 between SAVA5 and W3422, inclusive.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said DNA polymorphism is located on the short arm of chromosome 18 between D18S1140 and W3422, inclusive.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said DNA polymorphism is located on the short arm of chromosome 18 between D18S1140 and at201, inclusive.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said DNA polymorphism is located on the short arm of chromosome 18 between D18S1140 and ta201, inclusive.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said DNA polymorphism is located on the short arm of chromosome 18 between D18S59 and ta201, inclusive.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said analyzing further comprises:

a. obtaining DNA samples from family members of said individual,

b. analyzing said DNA samples from family members for the presence of said DNA polymorphism, and

c. correlating the presence or absence of the DNA polymorphism with a phenotypic diagnosis of bipolar mood disorder for said individual and for said family members.

9. A method for detecting the presence of a DNA polymorphism linked to a gene associated with bipolar mood disorder in an individual comprising:

a. typing blood relatives of said individual for a DNA polymorphism located within a 500kb region of chromosome 18, wherein said region is located between SAVA5 and ga203, inclusive,

b. analyzing a DNA sample from said individual for the presence of said DNA polymorphism.

10. A method of genetically diagnosing bipolar mood disorder in an individual comprising:

a. obtaining a DNA sample from said individual,

b. analyzing said DNA sample for the presence of a DNA polymorphism associated with bipolar mood disorder, wherein said DNA polymorphism is located within a 500 kb region of chromosome 18, wherein said region is located between SAVA5 and ga203, inclusive.

11. A method of confirming a phenotypic diagnosis of bipolar mood disorder in an individual comprising:

a. obtaining a DNA sample from said individual,

b. analyzing said DNA sample for the presence of a DNA polymorphism associated with bipolar mood disorder, wherein said DNA polymorphism is located within a

500 kb region of chromosome 18, wherein said region is located between SAVA5 and ga203, inclusive.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein said individual has Spanish or Amerindian ancestry.

13. A method of classifying subtypes of bipolar mood disorder comprising:

a. identifying one or more DNA polymorphisms located within a 500 kb region of chromosome 18, wherein said region is located between SAVA5 and ga203, inclusive; and

b. analyzing DNA samples from individuals phenotypically diagnosed with bipolar mood disorder for the presence or absence of one of more of said DNA polymorphisms.

14. A method of treating an individual diagnosed with bipolar mood disorder comprising:

a. identifying one or more DNA polymorphisms located within a 500 kb region of chromosome 18, wherein said region is located between SAVA5 and ga203, inclusive; and

b. analyzing DNA samples from individuals phenotypically diagnosed with bipolar mood disorder for the presence or absence of one of more of said DNA polymorphisms, and

c. selecting a treatment plan that is most effective for individuals having a particular genotype within said 500 kb region of chromosome 18.

15. An isolated polynucleotide capable of selectively hybridizing with a DNA sample from an individual phenotypically diagnosed with severe bipolar mood disorder, wherein said polynucleotide does not selectively hybridize with a DNA sample from an individual not affected by severe bipolar mood disorder, wherein said isolated polynucleotide selectively hybridizes with a complementary polynucleotide within a 500 kb region of chromosome 18, wherein said region is located between SAVA5 and ga203, inclusive.

16. The isolated polynucleotide of claim 15, wherein said complementary polynucleotide is within a 500 kb region of chromosome 18, between SAVA5 and ga203, inclusive.